Atom Bomb and Ahimsa

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HARIJAN

Editor: PYARELAL

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KHADI MAD

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

The Rajkot Rashtriyashala appeal about the Charkha Jayanti of this year is as follows:

"Jayanti Celebrations 8-7-'46 to 22-9-'46. Gandhiji enters his 78th year on 22-9-'46. Gandhi Jayanti is really Charkha Jayanti.

"He has called the Wheel the symbol of non-violence in a non-violent State. The Charkha which used to be looked upon as a sign of our poverty, helplessness and subjugation for centuries has now become the symbol of our political, economic and social freedom. To revive it means to put right the wrong of ages. The success of the endeavour will depend on the intensity of our faith. The greater the faith, the quicker the progress of the Charkha.

"This school has been celebrating Gandhi Jayanti for the last twelve years and its programme has definitely helped to create an atmosphere for Khadi. The A. I. S. A. has recommended it for the whole of India.

"This year's programme will commence with prayer at 7-30 a. m. on 8-7-'46. A pledge to spin for 77 days will be taken. I hope there will be many who will produce a hank a day. Those who cannot spare so much time will at least resolve to spin as much as they can.

"The yarn produced by each person may be utilized for his or her own needs and a small quantity given as a donation to the school. Those who care to donate money may, as usual, send 77 coins of whatever value they like. They should, however, remember that Gandhiji prefers donations in yarn to gifts in coin.

"There will be collective prayer every morning at 7-30 followed by collective spinning in which those who are in the forefront of the work take part. It is hoped that during these 77 days, Rajkot citizens will join in large numbers.

"Durbar Saheb Gopaldas, leader of Kathiawad, has resolved to spin 77 hanks. I hope all will follow his example and inform me accordingly.

"It is reckoned that the staff and young students of the Rashtriyashala will produce 20 lakhs of yards of Khadi yarn. This year the Virani Girls' School and High School, where spinning has a place in the daily curriculum, will also contribute a good quota.

"May God crown the effort with success.

NARANDAS GANDHI"

Narandas Gandhi is Khadi mad. There are two ideas governing my conception of a yarn bank. First, that all yarn in whatever quantity, of whatever quality and from wheresoever it comes, should be collected in one place. From there it should be sent to the weaver in such a condition as will enable him to weave it with the same speed as he weaves mill yarn. For this purpose all yarn has to be doubled and twisted. Yarn that has not been subjected to this process should not really be reckoned as yarn. There will thus be two kinds of yarn, one doubled and twisted and one single. The former will have a higher value. It will, of course, take time to achieve this desideratum. In the meantime, yarn will have to be separated and the single thread doubled and twisted and then woven into cloth at the yarn depot or wherever it may be suitable.

The second thing to remember is that just as gold and silver emerge as coin from a mint, so Khadi alone should emerge from a yarn bank. Not until such time as this happens, will the defects in hand-spun yarn be removed and the quality of Khadi improved beyond expectation. This work cannot be accomplished by compulsion. Khadi workers must be selfless, true and of a scientific mind for the easy, quick and voluntary achievement of this noble end.

To achieve it is the real goal of the Charkha Sangh. It will not matter if, in working up to this end, all the sales *bhandars* have to be closed and Khadi wearers reduced to a handful. Even so, there will be no shame attaching to the endeavour. On the other hand, if Khadi is sold as a symbol of hypocrisy and untruth, it will drag the names of both the Charkha Sangh and the Congress in the mud and Khadi will no longer be able either to deliver Swaraj or be the mainstay of the poor. Unbelievers will ask: "Then why take so much trouble over Khadi? Why not let it remain as one of the many occupations of village India, instead of being a fad of non-violence?" Those who are Khadi mad must learn the secret of the science of Khadi and be prepared even to die for it and thereby prove that it is the true symbol of non-violent Swaraj.

On the train to Poona, 29-6-'46

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

THE COFFIN AT THE FEAST

The first thing that the debonair tourist sees when he alights at Kincraig (Mussooree) is the sight of the policeman trying to control with his whip a large number of men, half-naked, half in rags, dirty and smelling, who pounce upon his luggage like hungry dogs on a loaf of bread. But he hardly takes notice of them except to get furious if some "dirty" coolie is pushed against him in the struggle for his luggage. The fortunate coolie picks up the luggage, another fortunate rickshawala picks up the human load and both are deposited at some fashionable hotel. A few annas, or may be a rupee or two, are thrown at them. The fashionable visitor is soon lost in the whirl of gaiety that is Mussooree. "How beautiful," he says, "the cinemas, dancing parties, skating, riding and above all fashionable society, all out for fun." The holiday is soon over and one day the man with the dirty rags is called once again. The luggage is picked up and as the outgoing tourist casts a longing, lingering look behind at the Savoy and Hackman's he hardly thinks of the miserable specimens of humanity walking in front of him. It never occurs to him that they are also of his kind.

It was to explore the quarters of these unfortunate, God-forsaken rickshaw coolies, load-carriers and sweepers that Gandhiji sent me during our stay at Mussooree. Shri Brijkishen Chandiwala of Delhi accompanied me. Going down dirty, smelling, narrow paths that look forbidding even in day time and are unlit at night, we crawled into human dens, where superfluous humanity is safely lodged, quite incapable of disturbing the gay round of Mussooree life.

Housing Conditions

The housing conditions of these labourers are simply revolting. The tenements provided are too few in number, ill-ventilated and ill-built. They are seldom repaired. During the rainy season, in the lower storeys generally, the walls drip and the floor is flooded. The rooms, generally 7'×7'×8' have to accommodate as many as sixteen people with their belongings, firewood, kitchen stove and what not. Obviously most of them have to sleep outside with scarcely enough covering under the shelter of the crags or on the verandahs of shops, even on the footpaths. We were told that about ten people die of exposure in cold weather every year.

As a labourer with hardly a few annas in his pocket, walks into Mussooree in the hope of making a living, he finds all doors shut against him and very often he has to spend the night under the shelter of a crag exposed to the cold and, may be, also rain. If he is fortunate enough to have some kind of friends who have preceded him, he may just get accommodation to deposit his things and to cook his food. The inclement sky is still his only friend at night. It is physically impossible for as many as sixteen people to sleep in a room 7'×7'×8'.

Latrines

Latrines are insufficient in number and very often far removed from the dwellings. In one place there was only one latrine and that also not of the flush type, for nearly a hundred people. Paths leading to them are precarious and unlighted so that to visit them at night must be very difficult, especially for women and children.

The Water Supply

There are a few municipal taps quite distant from the quarters. Bathing under them is prohibited. There are no public bathrooms for these labourers. Hence bathing and washing are luxuries rarely indulged in. In the hot weather the municipal taps are turned off for some hours during the day to economize water. The plight of the rickshaw coolies and labourers as a result may be imagined.

The Nepalese Quarters

Looking down from the road from Kincraig we saw a number of coolies basking in the sun, some sitting, some lying down, removing lice from their clothes or from one another's head. They were all housed in one room, 35'×10'×11' nearly, divided into three compartments. Each compartment held, I was told, about 30 coolies, making a total of a hundred coolies in that one room, with two windows and three doors. The ceiling was hung with dirty rags and bundles of faggots which considerably reduced the cubic space available. The whole ro[om] was filled with smoke. One felt choked.

The food which they ate was abominable. The flour was a strange, ugly looking mixture and the bread uneatable. Gandhiji, to whom we brought a specimen, described it as "indescribably bad". Vegetables are a luxury. Generally they prepare a gravy of flour, onion, salt and chillies. No wonder they often suffer from constipation and intestinal colic. Scabies and lice are common as is also lung trouble. In two or three years a rickshaw coolie becomes a cripple for the rest of his life. A load carrier may take a year longer. Due to the heavy load he carries and prolonged pressure of the strap attached to the load and passing round the head, the load carriers also develop an idiotic expression.

Rations

Starvation is the most common complaint and is most bitterly resented. Depending as they do entirely on bread, they feel the pinch most keenly wh[en] their ration of cereals is reduced from 1 seer to 6 *chhataks*. It has been raised to 8 *chhataks* in the case of license holders. The Ladakhis, working on the road, however, still get only 6 *chhataks*. Many of the labourers, I am told, have gone away from Mussooree because of this.

Medical Relief

There is a civil hospital and two charitable dispensaries. The latter are doing good work. But considering the large and widely dispersed labour population, the relief provided is hardly adequate. They cannot afford to attend the dispensary between fixed hours. Medical relief and education in health and hygiene has to be taken to their doors.

Economic Conditions

Most of the coolies come from the surrounding hills, where agriculture is so poor that the majority of a family have to go out in search of employment. On their arrival to Mussooree they have to borrow some money for their initial expenditure and so are

driven into the clutches of a money-lender, who obtains a stranglehold on them at the very outset. Some organization, voluntary or municipal, which may render them aid when they arrive in the hill-station, without any view to profit, is absolutely essential.

Income varies from month to month — ranging from Rs. 60 during the busy season to barely Rs. 25 in the slack. The average monthly income may be taken to be Rs. 40 while the average monthly expenditure is about Rs. 30. They generally manage to save about Rs. 50 during the summer season which serves to provide them food during the winter season and some help to their families whom they have left behind. In winter the latter pass some months in enforced idleness. For the rest they do some agriculture whose productivity is so little as to seem hardly worthwhile. Harassment by the corrupt police further depletes their little store. During my stay in Mussooree I heard many complaints of this type. An organization like the Mazdoor Sangh should register all such complaints, investigate them and try to remedy the evil. The labourers are also fleeced, it is alleged, at the Tehri State octroi posts by corrupt officials when they return to their homes with their meagre purchases from Mussooree.

Again the payment to the rickshaw owners is exorbitant amounting to 32%. In the case of coolies carrying load for the transport companies or railways, the corruption of the petty officials weighs very heavily on them.

So far about the rickshaw coolies and those who carry loads. The Ladakhis who work on the roads also earn about the same amount, i. e. thirty or forty rupees. Then there are the basket-boys — children of 10 or 12 carrying things for those who come for shopping. Sometimes they manage to earn enough for food. At other times they live on the charity of their elders. The case of the sweepers is different. Being municipal employees they get a fixed monthly pay ranging from Rs. 27 to Rs. 31 according to the nature of the work entrusted.

Some Suggestions

To sum up:

1. Coolie quarters on hygienic lines with proper bathrooms and latrines should be built by the Municipality, aided by the government, if necessary. If sufficient funds are not available, the expenditure should be met by an enhanced entertainment tax for which there seems to be plenty of scope in Mussooree. Rich philanthropists also can build clean quarters for these coolies on a strictly non-profit-making basis and charge them reasonable rents.

2. Labour should be organized and education in co-operation, clean living etc. be given. *Takli* and wool spinning can very usefully be introduced among them, especially the ricksha coolies, who have to sit idle for long hours during the day. Buying of wool, getting yarn woven, and disposing of cloth should be organized on a co-operative basis.

3. Organization of labour should include a programme for the introduction of shift system, regulation of hours of work, and protection of labourers from the tyranny of company *tandels*.

4. Four annas and a quarter per coolie, after deducting the payment to the rickshaw owner, is too small a payment for pulling a rickshaw for one hour. If the coolie pulls it for another one hour, he gets only 3 pice more (single rickshaw). These rates should be enhanced. It may be argued that the payment per hour is not less than in other forms of employment. That is true. But other forms of employment do not cripple a man in two or three years.

5. In the hot weather, when it is necessary to turn off the taps to save wastage of water, *chhabils* at various places should be provided by the Municipality. But really speaking, if things are efficiently managed and sufficient water is stored in reservoirs during the rainy season, the water supply of Mussooree should never run out.

6. Rickshaw stands should be provided with shelters and the coolie quarters should be located near them.

7. A proper system of medical relief should be organized.

The list is only illustrative. Other items can easily be thought out and added to it by a thoughtful and earnest worker.

Dev Prakash

A WISE TANNER AND A WISE KING

King Chandrapida of Kashmir started building a Vishnu temple and called it Tribhuvan Swami. The land required for the temple included a *chamar's* hut, but he refused to give it for any amount of money. The officials took the matter to the king. He told them that the fault was theirs. They should have consulted the *chamar* before starting work. The only way open to them now was to make it smaller or else choose another site. He could not countenance forcible eviction. If those whose job it was to discriminate between right and wrong did the wrong thing, who would be responsible for justice?

While this discussion was going on someone brought the news that the *chamar* had come to see the king. The king called him in. "Why do you stand in the way of our building a temple," he asked him. "I can build you a much better house than the one you have. And, if you wish it, I will pay you as much for your hut as you like."

The *chamar* replied: "O, king! you may dress your body in fine clothes and jewels and I might have nothing of the kind. Yet I am bound to love my body as much as you love yours. My poor hut is as dear to me as your palace is to you. I have lived in my hut from early childhood. It has been my companion in the days of happiness just as well as in the days of sorrow. How can I bear to pass it on to others? The gods when they are turned out from heaven or a king who has to abdicate will be able to understand what it feels to be homeless. If you come to my house and ask for the hut, I will give it to you as a gentleman. So the king went to the *chamar's* house, gave a lot of money to the *chamar* and took the hut for building the temple.

(From *Harijanbandhu*) V. G. D.

HARIJAN

July 7 1946

ATOM BOMB AND AHIMSA

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

It has been suggested by American friends that the atom bomb will bring in *ahimsa* (non-violence) as nothing else can. It will, if it is meant that its destructive power will so disgust the world that it will turn it away from violence for the time being. This is very like a man glutting himself with dainties to the point of nausea and turning away from them only to return with redoubled zeal after the effect of nausea is well over. Precisely in the same manner will the world return to violence with renewed zeal after the effect of disgust is worn out.

Often does good come out of evil. But that is God's, not man's plan. Man knows that only evil can come out of evil, as good out of good.

That atomic energy though harnessed by American scientists and army men for destructive purposes may be utilized by other scientists for humanitarian purposes is undoubtedly within the realm of possibility. But that is not what was meant by my American friends. They were not so simple as to put a question which connoted an obvious truth. An incendiary uses fire for his destructive and neferious purpose, a housewife makes daily use of it in preparing nourishing food for mankind.

So far as I can see, the atomic bomb has deadened the finest feeling that has sustained mankind for ages. There used to be the so-called laws of war which made it tolerable. Now we know the naked truth. War knows no law except that of might. The atom bomb brought an empty victory to the allied arms but it resulted for the time being in destroying the soul of Japan. What has happened to the soul of the destroying nation is yet too early to see. Forces of nature act in a mysterious manner. We can but solve the mystery by deducing the unknown result from the known results of similar events. A slave-holder cannot hold a slave without putting himself or his deputy in the cage holding the slave. Let no one run away with the idea that I wish to put in a defence of Japanese misdeeds in pursuance of Japan's unworthy ambition. The difference was only one of degree. I assume that Japan's greed was more unworthy. But the greater unworthiness conferred no right on the less unworthy of destroying without mercy men, women and children of Japan in a particular area.

The moral to be legitimately drawn from the supreme tragedy of the bomb is that it will not be destroyed by counter-bombs even as violence cannot be by counter-violence. Mankind has to get out of violence only through non-violence. Hatred can be overcome only by love. Counter-hatred only increases the surface as well as the depth of hatred. I am aware that I am repeating what I have many times stated before and practised to the best of my ability and capacity. What I first stated was itself nothing new. It was as old as the hills. Only I recited no copybook maxim but definitely announced what I believed in every fibre of my being. Sixty years of practice in various walks of life has only enriched the belief which experience of friends has fortified. It is however the central truth by which one can stand alone without flinching. I believe in what Max Muller said years ago, namely that truth needed to be repeated as long as there were men who disbelieved it.

Poona, 1-7-'46

MARRIAGES BETWEEN HARIJANS AND NON-HARIJANS

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

A friend from Patidar Ashram, Surat, writes to Shri Narhari Parikh:

> "In India the movement for removal of untouchability has received great impetus since Gandhiji's entry into politics. If he can find an educated Harijan girl to marry a caste Hindu it will help the movement in a way. But the question should be considered from another aspect also. Our country is still backward in female education and amongst Harijans who are backward in every way, educated girls can be counted on the fingers of one's hand. If they marry caste Hindus they will, as a rule, be cut off from their own society and absorbed by the caste Hindus. They will not be able to work for the uplift of their Harijan sisters from within. I know of one or two such instances.
>
> "One might say that in a way such marriages help to keep the Harijans in ignorance. The progress of a community depends on the progress of its women. By giving away the best of their womanhood to the caste Hindus, Bapu will be closing the door on the Harijans getting out of the blackest ignorance in which they are today steeped. I think this should be stopped. If Harijan girls are to marry caste Hindus it should be on condition that the couple will devote their lives to the service of the Harijans. Otherwise, educated Harijan girls should be encouraged to marry educated youths in their own community. If they are educated in the real sense of the term they will set an example to their community to emulate and follow.
>
> "You must be knowing that in our Ashram, Harijan and non-Harijan students live together without any distinction whatsoever. Parikshitlal sends to us one or two Harijan students every year. This year we had two. One of them said to me: 'Why does not Bapu encourage the marriages of educated caste Hindu girls with educated Harijan boys? This is what he should really encourage. If caste Hindu girls live amongst Harijans as Harijans, Harijan sisters will be able to learn a lot from them and Harijan uplift work will receive great impetus.' I could answer the question but I would rather that Bapu did so himself. It deserves serious thought."

If an educated Harijan girl marries a caste Hindu, the couple ought to devote themselves to the service of Harijans. Self-indulgence can never be the object of such a marriage. That will be improper. I can never encourage it. It is possible that a marriage entered into with the best of intentions turns out to be a failure. No one can prevent such mishaps. Even if one Harijan girl marries a caste Hindu with a high character it will do good to both the Harijans and caste Hindus. They will set up a good precedent and if the Harijan girl is really worthy, she will spread her fragrance far and wide and encourage others to copy her example. Society will cease to be scared by such marriages. They will see for themselves that there is nothing wrong in them. If children born of such a union turn out to be good, they will further help to remove untouchability. Every reform moves at the proverbial snail's pace. To be dissatisfied with this slowness of progress betrays ignorance of the way in which reform works.

It is certainly desirable that caste Hindu girls should select Harijan husbands. I hesitate to say that it is better. That would imply that women are inferior to men. I know that such inferiority complex is there today. For this reason I would agree that at present the marriage of a caste Hindu girl to a Harijan is better than that of a Harijan girl to a caste Hindu. If I had my way I would persuade all caste Hindu girls coming under my influence to select Harijan husbands. That it is most difficult I know from experience. Old prejudices are difficult to shed. One cannot afford to laugh at such prejudices either. They have to be overcome with patience. And if a girl imagines that her duty ends by marrying a Harijan and falls a prey to the temptation of self-indulgence after marriage, the last state would be worse than the first. The final test of every marriage is how far it develops the spirit of service in the parties. Every mixed marriage will tend in varying degrees to remove the stigma attached to such marriages. Finally there will be only one caste, known by the beautiful name *Bhangi*, that is to say, the reformer or remover of all dirt. Let us all pray that such a happy day will dawn soon.

The correspondent must realize that even the best of my wishes cannot come true on the mere expression. I have not succeeded in marrying off a single Harijan girl to a caste Hindu so far after my declaration. I have a caste Hindu girl who at her father's wish has offered to marry a Harijan lad of her father's selection. The lad is at present under training at Sevagram. God willing, the marriage will take place after a short time.

Poona, 30-6-'46
(From *Harijanbandhu*)

By M. K. Gandhi
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WHY KILL?

(By M. K. Gandhi)

The following suggestion has been received from Aligarh:

"You write: 'We have to kill monkeys, birds and animals which ruin the crops, or else keep someone who will kill them for us.' In this connection I wish to submit that if other means can be found to keep them off the crops, killing should not be necessary. My uncle has been able to keep monkeys off his field by using strong electric light at night. Why cannot this method be given a wider trial?"

At first sight the suggestion seems attractive, but on deeper thought one finds that it won't work. I might be able to protect my own field in this manner, but what of those round about? It will not be right for me selfishly to save my crops at the cost of others. That will be violence in the name of non-violence. For instance, we will throw a snake or rubbish from our own yard into that of our neighbour without compunction. True *ahimsa* demands that if we must save the society as well as ourselves from the mischief of monkeys and the like, we have to kill them. The general rule is that we must avoid violence to the utmost extent possible. Non-violence for the society is necessarily different from that for the individual. One living apart from society may defy all precaution, not so society as such. 30-6-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

SELF-RESTRAINT IN MARRIAGE

(By M. K. Gandhi)

The same correspondent from the Patidar Ashram, Surat, who put a question to Shri Narhari Parikh, has also asked the following:

"To marry and not have sexual commerce until Swaraj is attained is surely an inconsistency. He who wants to refrain has no need to marry and *vice versa*. Man is a civilized being. By introducing the institution of marriage, he has attempted to establish an ordered and just society. If there were no such institution as marriage, people would be quarrelling about matters of sex. Of course, marriage does not mean sexual license. There is room for self-restraint which adorns married life. The main purpose of married life is that man and woman should live together and thereby help each other's growth. It cannot be gainsaid that in this growth the sexual side must be satisfied but with due control. When, however, you ask a married couple to pledge themselves to complete sexual restraint until Swaraj is attained, it is really putting a premium on hypocrisy. There is even danger of moral perversion for the couple concerned. Exceptional men and women will refuse to be bound in marriage. Those who desire marriage are of the ordinary run of human beings. It is good that the particular bridegroom made it clear later on that he could not deny to his wife the right of motherhood. This sentence really saved Gandhiji's face. One cannot expect anything other than hypocrisy in the guise of celibacy in marriage.

"Gandhiji ought to explain clearly the implications of the vow of celibacy until the attainment of Swaraj. To me it appears quite ridiculous."

It is deplorable that the correspondent seems to take it for granted that the main thing in marriage is the satisfaction of the sexual urge. Rightly speaking, the true purpose of marriage should be and is intimate friendship and companionship between man and woman. There is in it no room for sexual satisfaction. That marriage is no marriage which takes place for the satisfaction of the sex desire. That satisfaction is a denial of true friendship. I know of English marriages undertaken for the sake of companionship and mutual service. If a reference to my own married life is not considered irrelevant, I may say that my wife and I tasted the real bliss of married life when we renounced sexual contact, and that in the heyday of youth. It was then that our companionship blossomed and both of us were enabled to render real service to India and humanity in general. I have written about this in my "Experiments with Truth". Indeed this self-denial was born out of our great desire for service.

Of course, innumerable marriages take place in the natural course of events and such will continue. The physical side of married life is given pre-eminence in these. Innumerable persons eat in order to satisfy the palate but such indulgence does not therefore become one's duty. Very few eat to live but they are the ones who really know the law of eating. Similarly, those only really marry who marry in order to experience the purity and sanctity of the marriage tie and thereby realize the divinity within.

The correspondent does not seem to be conversant with the full details of the Tendulkar-Indumati marriage. The vow of sexual restraint was an outcome of mature deliberation. The text was written in Hindustani. The papers put in their own English translations of it. The original provided for sexual intercourse if the wife desired progeny. This much is certain that both desired to observe restraint even after marriage. The union was for promotion of joint service. They had known each other for many years. Shri Indumati's parents gave their consent to this marriage after much testing. Then jail life prolonged the agony. Both parties as well as their elders were keen that the ceremony should take place in Sevagram Ashram, where Shri Indumati had lived for some time and derived solace. I am unaware of their whereabouts today. I have no reason to suspect hypocrisy in the transaction. But even if it is discovered, it would not prove that the vow of *brahmacharya* in married life is at fault. The fault lies in hypocrisy. An English poet has well said, "Hypocrisy is an ode to virtue." Wherever there are true coins, counterfeit ones will also be found. Where there is virtue there will be hypocrisy, i. e, vice masquerading as virtue. How tragic and surprising that a virtuous action should be sought to be stopped because of the fear of hypocrisy!

On the train to Poona, 30-6-'46

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

LEPROSY DAY BY DAY

The following is a report of leprosy work in South Arcot District by Prof. T. N. Jagdisan:

"The out-patient centre is attracting an increasing number of women and children patients. The total on the rolls at the end of May was 101, and the average attendance was about 30. This shows that many of the patients attend irregularly, and it has been suggested that the giving of meals to the patients on the injection days may help to make patients regular in their attendance. Some patients are beginning to show some visible progress and this may influence other patients to be regular in their treatment. It is also proposed to offer an incentive to patients to be regular by presenting cloth to those who have put in over 50% attendance twice a year, once in *Diwali*, and the second time in *Pongal*. Patients come from distances in the heat of the sun and it is very natural that they should at first be regular. There are two injection days in the week, but the doctor feels that even if the patients turned up once a week it should be enough. This a good many of the patients do.

"On the non-injection days the doctor has been pushing on the survey work. It is amazing how willing the rural population are to be examined for leprosy. Of course, since the villagers go out to the fields, the doctor has to make more than one visit to the same house to examine all the members, but it is encouraging that our doctor has succeeded in examining about 983 out of every 1,000. This intensive survey is one of the most effective kinds of propaganda and education. The patients and the others in the village come to know the first signs, understand the importance of the child in leprosy control, and gradually learn to know the less serious from the more serious types. The doctor teaches the patients and the villagers about the methods of keeping an infective case in the village without harm to children, but it is not in the beginning very easy to get the villagers to adopt isolation measures down in the village area and to spend my time in tackling this humane and cheap segregation. It needs and deserves whole-time workers. In my last visit I did succeed in getting the relations of one patient to give a separate hut for their infective relation. But then I have also to speak of the barber in Kandachipuram who is an open case, but who would not pay heed to our advice and goes on shaving the villagers. The remarkable fact is that people continue to go to him for shaving. The barber says: 'Give me a living and provide for my family. I will stop shaving.' I could get him, with some difficulty, admission into the Lady Willingdon Leprosy Sanatorium, Chingleput, but the man refuses to go there unless I get permission for him to go there with his wife. But I have not given up hope of tackling him yet. The doctor and I attended a constructive workers' camp in the district and delivered lectures and demonstrations on leprosy. The doctor gave two demonstration lectures in two villages."

A DISMAL PICTURE

A correspondent who knows what he is writing about in a letter addressed to Gandhiji points out that when Government was issuing press notes announcing the first approach of famine, rice was actually being exported from Bengal Ports. Publication of the news that rice was being exported from Calcutta Port in the month of January 1946 created a great sensation and as a result of pressure that was brought to bear upon them from various quarters, both the Central and Provincial Governments issued statements assuring that no rice would be exported from Bengal anymore. Nevertheless rice continued to be exported from Chittagong Port. The Bengal Manufacturers and Traders Federation disclosed the fact at a public meeting at Shraddhanand Park, Calcutta, on May 26th. This only evoked a press note (on 28th May) on the part of the Bengal Government to the effect that "rice was exported from Chittagong by the Tipperah State Agency and the Bengal Government was not responsible for it." !

As a further illustration of the inefficient and callous management on the part of the Government, the correspondent mentions, what is now common knowledge that " about 30 lakhs maunds of wheat have rotted in the Government godowns during the last twelve months". He suggests that distribution and preservation of food-grains should be entrusted to businessmen who must work on nominal commission basis under strict supervision and control of the people's committees.

The Government, he goes on to state, is making a profit of Rs. 4 and Rs. 10 per maund in the case of ordinary and better quality rice respectively, whereas businessmen and rice dealers previously used to make a profit of 2 to 4 annas per maund. On top of this, he says, paddy fields are being acquired by the Government for jute cultivation and workshops. "During the last period, Government occupied a huge area of paddy fields for military camps, air fields and workshops. These fields should be immediately released for cultivation. In 1945, about nine lakhs of *bighas* of land remained uncultivated which was cultivated during the year 1944. Moreover, there are 40 lakhs of *bighas* of land which are yet uncultivated and which may produce a good quantity of food-grains if cultivated."

In the meantime, the spectre of death has already begun to stalk the countryside and even in the streets of Calcutta deaths due to starvation have been reported. " Rice," says the correspondent, " is being sold for Rs. 50 per maund in Dacca and Rs. 45 at Mymensingh, while it costs Rs. 40 to Rs. 30 per maund in the other districts. Even in surplus districts rice is being sold for Rs. 20 per maund while previously the normal price of rice was Rs. 4 only per maund. As a record of inefficiency and callous indifference to human suffering this picture is hard to beat. It is bound to arouse widespread indignation. Let us hope that the authorities concerned will allay it by taking prompt and decisive action in respect of the matters complained of.

On the train to Poona, PYARELAL
29-6-'46

WEEKLY LETTER

THE WAY OF AHIMSA

Those who were being prematurely jubilant over what was blazoned as a rift between Gandhiji and the Working Committee are doomed to disappointment. They do not know how non-violence works. Difference of opinion does not mean dissension. Unity in diversity is nature's law. It is egotism which is the divisive force. Uttermost dedication to the cause, not mechanical conformity, is the test of loyalty. Therefore, his own difference of opinion was not intended to weaken but only to strengthen the Congress. Such was the burden of one of his discourses after prayer. " The Working Committee have come to a decision after much deliberation " he said. " Their one concern is the good of India. I want you to deduce from it that you should have faith that whatever is done in good faith will ultimately result in good. The last sixty years' unbroken record of Congress service warrants such faith on your part.

"A man or woman who serves India with all his or her heart stands on a par with the tallest Congressman. In God's eyes the service of the humblest will rank equal with that of the highest in the Congress organization, provided there is the uttermost dedication to the cause."

The daily reports about the calm, dignified behaviour of the Indian passive resisters in South Africa in the face of the hooliganism of some White people who were getting more and more frenzied, evoked pointed reference in his discourses during the remaining few days that Gandhiji was at Delhi. The Indians in South Africa are a mere handful, perhaps a little over two lakhs, in the midst of the overwhelming majority of White men and Negroes. "Imagine," observed Gandhiji, "what it must mean for men like Doctors Naicker and Dadoo to be required to live in special locations. I want you all to continue your prayers to God to enable our brethren to remain steadfast till the end and to vouchsafe wisdom to the Whites. Let me repeat that prayer from the heart can achieve what nothing else can in the world."

He paid tribute to the courage and suffering of the passive resisters without retaliation in the midst of the hooliganism which was daily increasing. He was born in India but was made in South Africa of which he knew practically every province. He had passed there twenty years of his life at its meridian. He knew the White men of South Africa. He loved them as well as his countrymen. He felt ashamed, he said, of the hooliganism of some of them. He had the fear that this hooliganism had the sympathy of the mass of the White men of the Union. Hooliganism would not flourish without such silent sympathy. He fondly hoped that as the White men realized the deep strength

and sincerity of Satyagrahis, they would begin to respect them and transfer their sympathy to the suffering passive resisters. He asked the gathering to offer their heartfelt prayers for God's mercy on the hooligans. He did not want them to send money to their countrymen. Money could not give them victory. They had money enough. But a time might come when it would be their duty in India to offer non-violent resistance of the purest type for the sake of their brethren. He could not tell how. India was fast becoming the granary of the honour and dignity of the human race. It would be in the fitness of things if it fell to their lot to help the struggle of the gallant resisters of South Africa. But for that the way must be clear before them. He felt that he would know when it was clear. Meantime he invoked the sympathy of the Viceroy and the White men and women of India to do their portion of duty.

A tinge of subdued emotion marked his address at the farewell prayer gathering. Taking stock of his nearly three months' communion with them (with only two breaks) he asked them to preserve and enlarge the most precious part of what he was leaving behind, viz. the practice of common prayer. He did not mind whether they recited the prayer verses or not. What was absolutely necessary was that all the members of their families should daily assemble at a convenient time and observe at the most five minutes' silence with concentration on God within.

IMPLICATIONS OF FAITH

After three months' unremitting labour in the 'dust bowl' of the Imperial City, Gandhiji is at last free to make a dash to Panchgani to re-charge his outworn body battery. "Two months' mountain air seems to be necessary to keep me going for the rest of the year. It is surprising, the difference it makes," he remarked on the eve of his departure from Delhi. "But I am not altogether sure," he added, "whether it is not *Ramanama* really that is responsible for the marvellous result." The same note of boundless faith in God was noticeable in a previous discourse at the prayer gathering. He was commenting on the allegory of *Gajendra* and *Graha*, the elephant king and the alligator that adorns the Bhagawata. "The moral of the story," he remarked, "is that God never fails his devotees in the hour of trial. The condition is that there must be a living faith in and the uttermost reliance on Him. The test of faith is that having done our duty we must be prepared to welcome whatever He may send — joy as well as sorrow, good luck as well as bad. We will then feel like King Janaka who, when informed that his capital was ablaze, only remarked that it was no concern of his. The secret of his resignation and equanimity was that he was ever awake, never remiss in the performance of his duty. Having done his duty he could leave the rest to God.

"And so a man of prayer will in the first place be spared mishaps by the ever merciful Providence but if the mishaps do come he will not bewail his fate but bear it with an undisturbed peace of mind and joyous resignation to His will."

A SIGN

If a sign were needed in confirmation of Gandhji's testament of faith that whom God protects no power on earth can injure, it was provided during our return journey to Poona. In the small hours of the night while proceeding at full speed between Neral and Karjat, the special by which Gandhiji was travelling, suddenly bumped against some boulders that seemed to have purposely been placed upon the railway track to derail it. The dynamo of the rear bogey was wrecked and the engine itself damaged. But for the presence of mind of the engine driver, who pulled up the train in time, it might have been completely wrecked and all the passengers hurled into nothingness. Luckily the train was not derailed and after temporary repairs, was able to proceed on its journey. During the night, while for over two hours hammers were at work loosening and separating the wrecked structures, Gandhiji slept the sleep of the just and innocent in spite of the crash and din of hammer's blows. When asked next morning whether he knew what had happened during the night he expressed surprise. "Oh! I wasn't aware of it," he only said.

Summing up his reaction to the incident at the first prayer gathering in Poona, he said: "This is perhaps the seventh occasion when a merciful Providence has rescued me from the very jaws of death. I have injured no man, nor have I borne enmity to any. Why should anyone have wished to take my life is more than I can understand. But the world is made like that. Men is born to live in the midst of dangers and alarms. The whole existence of man is a ceaseless duel between the forces of life and death. Even so, the latest accident strengthens my hope to live up to 125. *Ramanama* is my only strength and refuge. You should join me in reciting His name and install Him in your hearts if you want me to continue to serve you. God makes crooked straight for us and sets things right when they seem to go dead wrong."

Poona, 30-6-'46 PYARELAL

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